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# Pastor Leads His Flock to 'Blow-Up'

Rev. William Glenesk, pastor of the Spencer Memorial Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, reports that on Sunday, June 11, his entire congregation will assemble for services, not at the church chapel but at the nearby Cobble Hill theatre, where Michelangelo Antonioni's debated film, "Blow-Up," will serve as "the sermon" for the week.

Rev. Glenesk, has shocked some of his parishioners and fellow churchmen in the past by engaging in such activities as handing out copies of "Fanny Hill" at the church door ("I wanted to show them that the church doesn't have to be afraid of anything"). But this time he asserts that "Blow-Up's" failure to get an MPAA Production Code seal and its "condemned" rating from the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures had nothing to do with his choice of it for his service. Indeed, he says he didn't even know that problems existed.

In light of the fact that he has often used art works as part of the church service (dance, jazz, readings from "A Man for All Seasons," and recently, clips from "Ulysses"), he says, "Blow-Up" was suggested by members of the congregation who'd seen it and were anxious to discuss it. Since he'd also seen it, and thought of it as a work which "opens up questions of conscience and concern," he readily agreed.

He'd hoped, he said, to show the film in the church, but MGM didn't have a 16m print, so Cobble Hill offered its space, and Metro provided a 35m print, free of charge.

Despite the change of location, services will begin with a brief recitation of the liturgy, then there'll be "Blow-Up," as sermon; and finally, after the film, the usual "after-service dialogue," at which several professional photographers will serve as panel. (Film's central character is a photographer, and it's a "blow-up" of one of his photographs that triggers the plot.)

## Pastor's Further Says

Pastor was told this week that the film is having trouble getting bookings in several localities. One way to solve the problem, he said, would be for ministers to show it in their churches or parish houses.

"The church would be an excellent place to show a picture that people are concerned about," he said, "because it has a moral immunity, or is supposed to have, and it has an unquestioned purpose." And a minister, he suggested, would be the best one to explain to a community that the film has "spiritual dimensions."

"The church," Glenesk added, "should be a frontier; should serve a ground-breaking role, forcing us out of rigid moral restrictions."

If a minister in, let's say, Wilkes-Barre, does decide to show "Blow-Up" at his church, Glenesk suggests a preliminary talk with the elders to explain the purpose of the showing, but even then he anticipates a division in the congregation.

"Even so," he said, "sometimes there should be a divided house. Remember, some of the things Christ said and did shocked a lot of people in his day. Now, we should be doing the shaking."